

TOPICS AT THE CAPITAL.

POLITICAL AND SCIENTIFIC OPINION.

REPUBLICAN SENATORS REACH NO CONCLUSION ABOUT EXECUTIVE SESSIONS—THE VIEWS OF A SCIENTIST—THE MONROE DOCTRINE AND THE SHIP CANAL.

The Republican Senators met in caucus yesterday and discussed the expediency of holding executive sessions of the Senate; no definite conclusion was reached. Professor Newcomb conversed yesterday with a TRIBUNE correspondent about the new device of Professor Gangee, previously noticed in THE TRIBUNE. In the United States Senate a resolution was introduced and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, declaring the consent of the United States to be a necessary condition precedent to the construction of a ship canal across the Isthmus connecting North and South America.

THE DEADLOCK UNBROKEN.

NO DECISION REACHED BY THE REPUBLICAN CAUCUS AS TO HOLDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS—A FRANK AND FRIENDLY DISCUSSION.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The Republican Senators were in caucus five hours to-day, and the expediency of holding executive sessions from time to time during the continuance of the present struggle to gain control of the organization of the Senate was very freely and fully discussed. Senators are very reticent to-night as to the proceedings of the caucus; but there is excellent reason to believe that the arguments used for and against the consideration of executive business before the end of the pending struggle were fairly outlined in a dispatch printed in THE TRIBUNE to-day.

The number of Senators who believe that executive sessions can be held without detracting from the strength of the Republican position has increased considerably during the past fortnight, and several of those Senators made strong speeches to-day in support of their views. It is understood, however, that no vote was taken which indicated the relative strength of those who do and those who do not favor the consideration of any executive business during the pendency of the struggle for the Senate organization.

The discussions were conducted in a spirit of great friendliness, and the supporters of each position showed much deference toward the arguments of their opponents. On the question of standing firmly by the determination neither to abandon nor postpone the struggle for the principle that the constitutional majority shall control the organization and order of business of the Senate, the Senators were unanimous; and it is said that their determination to do this, if possible, more firm than it was a month ago.

The difference of opinion regarding the expediency of holding executive sessions in the interim of the present struggle is an honest one, and it has existed since the inception of the present struggle. Much was said to-day regarding the effect upon the organization of the Senate of the introduction of executive business in order to attend to certain executive business. It is understood that the discussion of this phase of the subject elicited unanimous expressions of opinion that the Republicans should not give up the principle that nothing should be done which can possibly be construed as giving encouragement to the Republicans of the opposition.

The caucus adjourned to meet at the call of the President. In the meantime it is understood that a committee will take into consideration the questions discussed to-day, and will make a report at the next meeting of the caucus. It is probable that the morning the Senate will adjourn until next Monday.

THE AMMONIA ENGINE.

PROFESSOR NEWCOMB'S COMMENTS ON PROFESSOR GANGEE'S NEW DEVICE—THE CLAIMS MADE FOR IT IN VIOLATION OF WELL KNOWN LAWS.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—A correspondent of THE TRIBUNE asked Professor Simon Newcomb, the eminent physicist, this evening for his opinion of the new device of Professor Gangee, described editorially in THE TRIBUNE of yesterday.

Professor Newcomb said: "The question is purely one of physics, and not of steam engineering. The proposed machine, as Mr. Gangee has explained it to me, and as I see it described in Mr. Isherwood's report, lacks the essential conditions which all experience shows a steam engine must fulfill; not merely because ammonia is used instead of steam, but because no source of external cold or exit for the vapor is employed, except that furnished by the engine itself. I think there is some mistake in describing the respective functions of the high and low pressure boilers in the printed remarks in yesterday's TRIBUNE; but I think I see clearly what the essential principle is. We have a boiler of liquid ammonia exerting an enormous pressure at ordinary temperatures. A quantity of the vapor from this boiler is admitted into the cylinder of the engine, and thus presses upon the piston, expanding and moving the piston. Its heat is changed into force communicated to the piston, and it thus becomes in the cylinder intensely cold; so cold that a portion of it liquefies.

"So far there is no trouble in the action of the engine. It will make one stroke without doubt. The question now is to dispose of this cool and expanded vapor. The great mistake made by the promoters is in supposing that they can, by some ingeniously contrived machinery, force the vapor back again, so as to act again on the engine and still have a surplus of force left over. It is a perfectly established law of gases—that as certain and universal as that of gravitation—that a gas when condensed generates the same amount of heat and exerts the same pressure as in expanding. The consequence is that, when the gas is condensed without some external source of cold, all the power expended in its expansion is used up again in contracting and heating it. Unless, therefore, as in the ordinary steam engine, some external source of cold is provided to absorb the heat which would thus be generated, the machine cannot act. Now this is the very condition which Mr. Gangee proposes to dispense with. With the ammonia engine working at ordinary temperatures, the external source of cold must be as low in temperature as the expanded ammonia itself, and therefore the ammonia cannot be used for the cold.

"I judge of all this we must remember that there is absolutely no new principle claimed in connection with the machinery, and claims made for it are in direct contradiction to the second law of thermodynamics. Yet I do not think a prudent physicist would claim that it was impossible to find in nature some mechanism by which this law could be evaded. All we can say is that to reach this result some radically new device must be found, the properties of matter must be applied. As there is nothing new in any of the principles called into play in the proposed engine, it will be pronounced a chimera with as much certainty as we can call perpetual motion machines by that name."

UNIFORM DUTY ON BOOKS.

A TREASURY CIRCULAR TO PREVENT THE IMPORTATION OF BOOKS IN SHEETS FREE OF DUTY.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The Treasury Department has received information that there is a lack of uniformity at the various ports in regard to the assessment of duty on books imported into the United States through the mails. The act of March 3, 1879, provides that books which are admitted to the International Mail Exchange under the provisions of the Universal Postal Union, may, when subject to customs duty, be delivered to the addressee in the United States payment of duties, and exempt from duty "printed matter other than books" received through the mails. A circular was issued by the Treasury Department on the 25th inst. directing the various ports to conform to the provisions of the act of March 3, 1879, in which the following is embodied:

"Hereafter, all books of whatever value, imported under this act (quoted above) will be treated as dutiable at 25 per cent ad valorem. The provision for books will be held to include such as are bound in stiff covers, and also such as are usually so bound. The provision for printed matter includes pamphlets, booklets, and other similar matter, photographs and music.

THE ELECTRICAL EXHIBITION.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The Department of State has received advice from Mr. Walker, the Ex-

ecutive Commissioner of the Electrical Exhibition at Paris, from which it appears that all facilities will be extended to make the American exhibit successful. A large space has already been set aside for American exhibitors, and special rooms assigned for showing the advantages of electric lighting. The French Commissioner-General, M. Berger, announces that he will be prepared to receive heavy machinery after May 1, and that it is very desirable that such should arrive as quickly as possible after that date. Exhibitors are requested to give notice through the State Department of the number of packages they propose to forward, in order that the proper official labels may be issued. The American Commission, as now fully organized, comprises Robert R. Hitt, as Acting Commissioner-General, with George Walker, George F. Barker, George E. Goode, Charles K. Goodwin and Captain D. P. Heap, U. S. A., and Lieutenant T. C. McLean, U. S. N., as Commissioners; and Mr. Philip Walker, as secretary to the Commission.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE AND INTEROCEANIC CANALS BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—After the Senate was called to order this morning, Mr. Morgan (Dem., Ala.) asked leave to offer a concurrent resolution, declaring that the interests of the people of the United States of America, and the welfare and security of the Government are so involved in the subject of the construction of ship-canal or other ways for the transportation of sea-going vessels across the isthmus connecting North and South America, that the Government of the United States, with the frankness which is due to all other peoples and governments, hereby asserts that it will insist that its consent is a necessary condition precedent to the execution of such a project, and also to the rules and regulations which other nations shall participate in the use of such canal or other ways, either in peace or in war.

Mr. Dawes (Rep., Mass.) objected to the resolution, not so much on account of the sentiments contained in it, as on account of the fact that it needed the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Morgan argued that the resolution was in proper form. He merely wished to have it referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and that Committee, if it saw fit, might, by making it a simple Senate resolution, if this resolution was of any importance at all, it would be of sufficient importance to require immediate attention, because a company was already engaged in the construction of a trans-isthmian canal. It was time that this question was considered. The people of France and England and other nations would be deceived by the non-action of this Government, in not letting the world know its position on this subject.

Mr. Hoar (Rep., Mass.) thought that it might be well to modify the resolution as suggested by his colleague. Mr. Morgan expressed his willingness to adopt the suggestion. He had reached up the resolution in its present form, but that, should there be a called session of Congress, it might receive immediate attention.

Mr. Blair (Rep., N. H.) thought that the resolution should be referred to a select committee, and that the committee should be authorized to report on the subject. He did not think that the resolution should be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, as it was not a question of foreign relations, but a question of domestic policy. He thought that the resolution should be referred to the Committee on Commerce and Manufactures, as it was a question of commerce and manufacture.

After two or three brief colloquies, Mr. Morgan moved that the resolution be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The motion was carried. The resolution was then read and passed. The Senate then adjourned until next Monday.

Mr. Dawes (Rep., Mass.) inquired where the Senator from New York was. He was not present. Mr. Morgan said that he was not present. Mr. Dawes said that he was not present. Mr. Morgan said that he was not present.

COMMERCIAL STATISTICS.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The Chief of the Bureau of Statistics, in his monthly statement for the current fiscal year, of the imports and exports of the United States, reports the excess of exports of merchandise to be as follows:

Month ended March 31, 1880, \$2,414,558. Month ended March 31, 1881, \$2,414,558. Twelve months ended March 31, 1880, \$2,414,558. Twelve months ended March 31, 1881, \$2,414,558.

The excess of imports of gold and silver coin and bullion was as follows:

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The exports of gold and silver coin and bullion during the months of January, February and March, 1880, exceeded the imports by \$4,774,646.

NOMINATIONS.

WASHINGTON, April 27.—The President sent the following nominations to the Senate to-day:

Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall Harlan, of Kentucky; Chief Justice, John Marshall Harlan, of Kentucky; Associate Justice, John Marshall Harlan, of Kentucky.

WASHINGTON, Wednesday, April 27, 1881. Senator Blair left Washington this morning for his home in Oregon. He is paired with Senator Platt, of Connecticut, for the remainder of the session.

The time for receiving proposals at the Department of State for the erection of a monument to mark the birthplace of Washington, as heretofore announced, has been postponed.

Instructions were to-day issued to Collectors of Internal Revenue fixing the pay of storekeepers and gaugers, when on duty at distilleries having a surveyed capacity of not less than five hundred bushels, at \$3 per day, and \$4, as at present.

A telegram from Fort Keess, M. T., has been received at the War Department announcing that thirty-two lodges of Uteapah Sioux Indians surrendered April 14, consisting of 47 men, 29 women, 25 boys and 45 girls, and possessing 50 ponies, 16 guns and 3 revolvers.

The President has designated the following as members of the Board of Visitors at West Point: Anson Stager, of Illinois; Milo S. Haseall, of Indiana; Charles A. Boutelle, of Maine; George S. Greene, of Georgia; Henry E. Bayard, of Michigan; S. S. Lowe, of Missouri; and D. C. Buell, of Kentucky.

Bids were opened to-day at the Post Office Department for furnishing the Department with all classes of postage stamps for the ensuing fiscal year. The American Bank Note Company of New York offers to furnish all the stamps at a uniform rate of 90 cents per thousand. The contract will be awarded to this company.

The Secretary of the Treasury has said that he has decided to have a writ of habeas corpus issued in the case of Welsh against the Government, and that the writ will be issued in the case of the Welsh against the Government, and that the writ will be issued in the case of the Welsh against the Government.

It will be necessary hereafter for cigar manufacturers to apply to the Commissioner for permission to remove cigars from factories including unstamped cigars. Collectors are authorized to grant permission to manufacturers to remove their cigars from factories including unstamped cigars.

Mr. Duran, advocate for the United States before the Spanish-American Claims Commission, is engaged in preparation of a letter to Count Levenhaupt, the arbitrator, requesting him to modify his recent decision in the case of the Spanish-American Claims Commission.

The Rev. Mr. De Costa, secretary of the American branch, read a paper giving the history and purposes of the society. Its object, he said, is to unite persons who agree upon the need to be secured, the removal of intolerance that may be inflicted by the majority upon the minority.

The first of the public places or at bars, and the third to promote the general purposes of the society. Religion is regarded as the basis for work upon, though secondary means, such as coffee-houses and reading rooms, are to be provided. The Rev. Dr. Huntington thought that the society could not succeed because it would be impracticable.

SPRINGFIELD, Mass., April 27.—The conference of Episcopal clergymen in this city to-day to discuss the claims and methods of the New Church Temperance Society was rather poorly attended. The Rev. Mr. De Costa, secretary of the American branch, read a paper giving the history and purposes of the society.

LONG BRANCH SCHOOL AFFAIRS. LONG BRANCH, April 27.—At a special meeting of the Long Branch School Board, held to-day, the board decided to accept the offer of the Long Branch School Board, and to accept the offer of the Long Branch School Board.

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The excitement of the natives is spreading even to the Tripolitan tribes. The Governors of Kef and Saida have issued orders to the Bey and have been ordered to surrender to the French under protest.

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It is said that M. Gambetta is privately encouraging the Government to act vigorously with regard to Tunis. The Cabinet are divided on the subject.

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THE ANTI-SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. LONDON, April 27.—A semi-official dispatch published in Paris says: "Some governments, especially that of England, have raised objections to the Russian proposal of a conference on the subject of the rights of the governments are said to be willing to satisfy the legitimate desires of Russia by legal changes and extradition treaties."

CUBAN AFFAIRS. HAVANA, April 23.—The installation of objects in the Matanzas Exhibition building is now complete and the interior presents in several respects a most attractive aspect. The enterprise has not been pecuniarily successful. From \$130,000 to \$150,000 in solid money was used.

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A dispatch from Berlin to THE Standard says: "Without evincing any disposition to adopt a mixed standard, Germany is sounding the Monetary Conference in regard to the practicability of fixing the price of silver for a number of years. The success of this plan, which will assist Germany to dispose of her superfluous silver in the most advantageous manner, must depend upon the figure determined upon."

CHINESE WAR VESSELS. LONDON, April 27.—Chinese officers and crews have arrived in the Tyne to man six swift steam vessels built there for China.

THE ANTI-SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. LONDON, April 27.—A semi-official dispatch published in Paris says: "Some governments, especially that of England, have raised objections to the Russian proposal of a conference on the subject of the rights of the governments are said to be willing to satisfy the legitimate desires of Russia by legal changes and extradition treaties."